

No 'shame' attached to biting into this particular apple: identifying and addressing first-year students academic language needs.

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English-medium universities face ongoing challenges meeting the academic language needs of students for whom English is an additional language (EAL). At our large multi-cultural university we have successfully implemented the Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA), an efficient, cost-effective procedure which identifies students' strengths and weaknesses in academic English in order to guide them, where necessary, to appropriate language enrichment programmes taken concurrently with their studies. It has now become embedded in all first-year programmes and grown to meet the needs of both teaching staff and students. This poster displays the process from students' offer of a place at the University through to advice about language enrichment. The raison d'être of DELNA is to identify first-year students who need language enrichment as they begin their studies and persuade them that it is to their advantage and that there is no 'shame' attached to biting into this particular 'apple'.

Since 2002 DELNA, a two-tier language assessment has been delivered post-entry to first-year students at The University of Auckland. A diagnostic, not a selection tool it does not affect students' academic programmes. It comprises a quick screening procedure (vocabulary and cloze elide tasks) to filter out linguistically able students, and a performance-based diagnostic assessment to identify academic listening, reading and writing needs.

Students identified by the diagnosis as being in need of language support collect their results from the DELNA Academic Language Adviser, who discusses their university programme, guides them to the most appropriate language support and keeps in touch with them by email during the semester.

The uptake of the screening is now very high in a first-year student population of just over 6000, but the uptake of the diagnosis is not. The screening, delivered online since 2004, allows staff to get a quick snapshot of the language profile of a whole course and students of all language backgrounds are able to be persuaded to book online for a very quick assessment on a computer. Those recalled for the diagnosis, are less enthusiastic, and often fear, that in spite of the positive presentation of DELNA, the results on the diagnosis will affect their grades. In spite of this poor response to the diagnosis, DELNA has been successful in raising the awareness of both students and staff about language issues and continues to be the impetus for the development of more language support programmes within faculties.